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NEWS AND VIEWS

The curtain is descending on the drama of Father Philip Berrigan and his three co-protestors of the Vietnam war who last October poured a mixture of their own and ducks' blood into draft record files of Selective Service headquarters in Baltimore.

Conspiracy charges against the four were dropped, but all were convicted April 16 of mutilating and destroying government records and interfering with the Selective Service program. They are free now on their own recognition and awaiting sentence, due about mid-May. They are liable to terms totaling 18 years and fines up to \$17,000.

So only the final act remains to be played out. But it may not be so routine as many might figure. It just might be that Berrigan and his co-defendants will accomplish at their sentencing ends which eluded them during the trial.

One is wide propagation of the reasoning that motivated the blood-spilling action. Another is inscription into the record of their action framed in its moral and political context.

The first failed of achievement when the combination of the King assassination, the Baltimore riots and (to lesser degree) the Wisconsin primary drained off media coverage from the trial; the second, when a most literal of judges barred testimony and witnesses not directly related to the incident itself.

At the sentencing session, defense counsel Fred E. Weisgal proposes to enter, through a pre-sentence report and character witnesses, testimony which was barred at the trial. Counsel hopes to do this in a courtroom crowded with sympathizers, with as many priests and religious there as possible, and before influential media people.

Whatever his success, two things are certain: neither Berrigan nor Tom Lewis, artist co-defendant, will accept a probationary sentence that involves conditions; nor, if a new trial is pursued, will either accept a bond situation for their freedom between trials.

Incidentally, Berrigan and his colleagues, though they share disappointment over the news blackout and legal vacuum in which the trial took place, do not harbor bitterness. Berrigan even waxes jolly and whimsically points to the length of time that the jury was out as a triumph of sorts.

The jury deliberated for two hours, lunchtime included.

Many large corporations still seem to consider social obligations discharged if they are able to present in their reports to stockholders lush, four-color photographs of Negroes using their products; e.g., the recent annual report of Xerox.

On the other hand, there are corporations newly conscious of their responsibilities within the community, and anxious that their reports reflect something of this awareness. Hence, the increasing tendency of corporations to state their social commitments in their reports and cite the new and higher place which the Negro has in the firm's operations.

Interestingly enough, one of the most convincing of such presentations comes from a company which just a year ago was embroiled in bitter controversy over employment practices—Eastman Kodak.

In a report "Kodak Faces the Urban Crisis," Kodak president Louis K. Eilers concedes that "former guidelines for good corporate citizenship may no longer be adequate."

The report proceeds to outline Kodak's response to the problems of unemployment, housing and education in Rochester.

Though Kodak probably hasn't gone as far as Saul Alinsky and other community leaders might like, its report still makes persuasive reading. Certainly it is encouraging indication of the leverage which small but militant citizen groups can exert nowadays on the giant corporation. The lesson ought not be lost.

Speaking of big business, riot-control equipment stocks appear to have replaced gold stocks as the hot item on the stock exchanges. Since Jan. 1, Bangor Punta Corporation, makers of pistols, tear gas and chemical mace, rose from a low of 35½ to a high of 61½; Breeze Corporation, makers of tear gas, grenades and auxiliary equipment, from 17¾ to 37¾; Baker Industries, from 28½ to 39¾, and Wackenhut, from 16½ to 22½.

Though these stocks have slipped some from their highs, all on balance are strong gainers and bright investment prospects for those who don't have qualms about turning a quick buck on the unrest in the cities.

Indeed, the boom is still to come. The law-enforcement market in the U.S. right now is a \$2.5 billion item. But with 66 percent of the nation's police forces below authorized strengths and a hot summer ahead, there's a real future in riot-control equipment stocks. All you need is a little money and a stone conscience.

For those still playing the numbers game, the new edition of Kenedy's *Official Catholic Directory* doesn't offer much consolation on the state of the American Church.

Infant baptisms, down 84,096 in last year's *Directory*, are off another 51,594 this year to 1,139,248. (Catholic marriages, on the other hand, went up 10,226 to 371,155.)

Converts, down 5,671 a year ago, have dropped another 6,761 to 110,717, the lowest total since 1953.

Ordained priests, up 699 a year ago, are down 89 this year. (The number of diocesan clergy increased 582; religious order priests dropped 671.)

Also, there are 278 fewer Brothers, 330 fewer Sisters; 5,543 fewer seminarians; 204,341 fewer students in Catholic elementary schools; 14,489 fewer students in Catholic high schools, and 250 fewer Catholic educational institutions.

Meanwhile, the Catholic population of the U.S. rose to a high of 47,468,333.

JOHN DEEDY

CORRESPONDENCE

Ghetto Seminars

Washington, D.C.
To the Editors: In your March 15 issue you had an article entitled "Washington's Prescription for the Ghettos," by Ernest Garvey, the pseudonym of a federal employee . . . The inaccuracies in the article in the order of their presentation are as follows:

Mr. Garvey indicated that a total of 25 police chiefs participated in four seminars. There were in fact 130 police executives involved in the seminars as participants and approximately 100 mayors and city managers attended portions of each conference also. In addition to these individuals, the Community Relations Service had a representative at two of the seminars.

Mr. Garvey indicated that an expanded program in 13 cities would "begin soon." There are five locations for 10 field conferences.

Mr. Garvey expresses the opinion that "it was apparent from the outset that the emphasis of the seminars was to be control rather than prevention." As the project director for the series of conferences, I think I can assure you that Mr. Garvey's understanding of our intentions is incorrect. I should mention also that the Community Relations Service was involved in the program planning sessions from the beginning and continues to be involved in assisting us in conducting the field conferences.

Mr. Garvey states that the Negro consultant to Leadership Resources, Inc., had left the organization six months prior to the January 14 meeting. The President of Leadership Resources, Inc., has informed me by letter of March 22 that the reference to their Negro consultants is completely false, that none of their Negro consultants had left the organization and that in fact they are in the process of bringing two Negro consultants into their organization.

Mr. Garvey reports that Mrs. Willie J. Hardy was kept from entering one of the seminars by a seminar participant,
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A CANDIDATE ILL-SERVED

Having taken care to avoid the primaries and to set limits on any discussion of Vietnam, Hubert Humphrey slipped conveniently into competition for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency on April 27, with ringing rhetoric about mobilizing human resources to bring unity to the land and about building a social order of freedom and compassion, for opportunity, for enterprise and for peace. It was an impassioned but disappointing performance, full of pieties, like those enumerated, and empty of program—a performance which gave clue that Humphrey the Candidate will be very much the Humphrey the nation has known for three years: the pleader of platitudes and the defender of policies that have split the country and left it morally bankrupt before the world. Yet, by the vagaries of American politics, this man emerges as the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination and as the favorite for election. Within hours after announcing, CBS News gave Mr. Humphrey 1,127 votes toward the 1,312 needed for nomination, and a UPI poll saw him holding 16 states and 211 of the 270 electoral votes necessary for election.

The irony of all this is not just that a candidate who offers the country nothing substantially different from what has torn it apart should be so comfortably placed thus early in the campaign, but rather that the contending candidate most in tune with the changing political times should remain so desperate an underdog. That man, of course, is Eugene McCarthy. Indeed, not only is Mr. McCarthy an underdog; as this is written in the last days of the Indiana campaign, he finds himself up against the ultimate bedevilment of political aspiration: finances. And thus the further irony, that despite the oratory about the politics of joy and of opportunity, political success in America still favors those who, like Mr. Humphrey, have open to them the coffers

of the party, or who, like Robert Kennedy, have private fortunes to tap. It has ever been so. Mr. Humphrey made the discovery in West Virginia in 1960; Mr. McCarthy is making it in Indiana in 1968. And if the consequences are fatal to Mr. McCarthy's chances, then the loser will not be he alone. It may be a whole nation.

Finally there is the ultimate irony, that the candidate who has done the most to open up new political categories and who has the most to say about the nation and its problems—Eugene McCarthy—has the least of his program and thought getting through to the public. The media bear a fault here. Whatever the admitted inadequacies of McCarthy press relations, the fact remains that the propensity of the media has been to focus on the wit and headline the asides, but skim over the substance. Hence, after months of campaigning, the public image of Eugene McCarthy is one of a bantering Don Quixote, or a phlegmatic, professorial type, a candidate without a carefully formulated political program and not to be taken seriously.

The truth is that of all the Democratic candidates, Mr. McCarthy has the most innovative and promising of programs. Mr. Humphrey encores as the last breath of the orthodox Democrat establishment, an obsolete New Dealer rooted in Cold War policies. Robert Kennedy, to this point at least, is too much the artful campaigner, a man of muted themes and shifting emphases playing with surface emotions. Mr. McCarthy, on the other hand, proceeds methodically about piecing together a hard legislative program systematized throughout.

Unfortunately, this program escapes public attention. The public is acquainted with certain McCarthy dispositions, like his calls for the replacement of Dean Rusk, the retirement of J. Edgar Hoover and the containment of General Hershey. But it is ignorant that these proposals fit into a larger pattern for the reauthentication of life in America. The public is aware that Mr. McCarthy is opposed to the war in Vietnam, but it knows virtually nothing of McCarthy's concrete formula for peace. It knows little or nothing, either, about his fiscal program, his theories on foreign policy and the CIA, or about his vision of new social legislation, including a guaranteed annual income for all Americans. And it is still wondering when Eugene McCarthy is going to "speak out" on civil rights.

The last is the unkindest cut of all for it does violence to the record and hurts McCarthy among a people whose welfare has always been a prime concern of his. McCarthy has spoken out often and notably on civil rights—in the ghettos of Milwaukee, in Newark, at Boston University—both with empathy and with a program to establish a whole new set of civil rights, in employment, health care, education, housing and income. His position could not be clearer, but it has not gotten across.

Part of the blame for this is undoubtedly Mr. McCarthy's. But not nearly so much as it is the blame of the news media for not covering well the candidate who merits the most coverage, Eugene McCarthy.

A RACIST CHURCH?

There was a time—and a long time it was, too—when even such a gentle apostle as the late Father John LaFarge was considered "too radical" on the race question by many of his fellow-Catholics. Things have changed somewhat since then, and over the years there have been a few other Catholic heroes, a few institutions like Friendship House, a few organizations like the Catholic Interracial Councils, and, recently, a few dioceses like Detroit. But no one, we think, would claim that white Catholics have particularly distinguished themselves in the fight against racism. Knowing this, though, it still comes as something of a shock when black Catholics tell white Catholics exactly what they think, which is what happened at the recent Black Clergy Conference, and when these views are spread all over the press.

Meeting in Detroit, the members of the Conference described the Catholic Church in the United States as "primarily a white racist institution" and said that "the Church is now in an extremely weak position in the black community." In the light of this conviction, the conference demanded that there be "black priests in decision-making positions on the diocesan level and, above all, in the black community"; that every effort be made to recruit Negroes for the priesthood (how short a time ago a black applicant would have had a hard time finding a seminary to accept him!); that dioceses establish training centers for white priests scheduled to serve in black communities; "that where no black priests belong to a diocese, efforts be made to get them in"; that Negroes, married and single, be ordained permanent deacons; that each diocese in the United States allocate substantial sums for black leadership training; that within the United States Catholic Conference "a black-directed department be set up to deal with the Church's role in the struggle of black people for freedom."

What will be the Catholic reaction to the statement by the Black Clergy Conference? It is encouraging that at their annual spring meeting the American bishops endorsed the national riot commission's conclusion that white racism was the major cause of racial strife in the nation's cities; at the same time this does not necessarily mean too much, for the second Vatican Council demonstrated that bishops are much more progressive in a body than they are singly. We would like very much to think that things have changed, but we are not too hopeful. If past experience is any guide, at least, those Catholics and Catholic institutions and dioceses which have in fact done something in the fight against racism will strike their breasts, admit to sins and say *mea culpa*. And at the same time those who have done little or nothing will attack the members of the Black Clergy Conference and indignantly deny their charge—when all the while the purely token Negro presence in their schools, seminaries, and religious communities, will give the lie to their denial.

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King's killer is, as I write, the subject of a nationwide manhunt; the FBI has accused a man and put him on their "ten most wanted" list. Bobby Hutton's killer is putting in his regular shift on the Oakland police force; if he gets any special attention at all, it will probably be a commendation.

Of course, the Panthers have not *done* anything revolutionary, and it has yet to be proved that any of them has ever *shot* anyone with a gun except in legal self-defense (one Panther stands accused of killing a policeman, but he has pleaded not guilty and has not yet come to trial). We do not, however, react to the fact that the Panthers haven't done anything. There is an automatic bounty on Panthers in Oakland. They are "militants," like Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown (neither of whom so far as I know has so much as shoved anybody yet), and since we all know that "militants" are bad, the Panthers are fair game.

Some of what happened on the night of April 6 in Oakland I cannot say, either for legal reasons or because I just don't know. But I do know and can report that the Oakland police—whose version is the only one most Americans have seen—have simply been lying outright about the whole incident. They said, for instance, that the whole “gun battle” started with a Panther “ambush.”

The police “leaked” a story that the Panthers and some white radicals in Berkeley had concocted a plot: the Panthers (who have in fact made a political alliance with California’s radical Peace and Freedom Party) were supposed to start an “incident,” a “telephone network” was supposed to alert the radicals, and the radicals were supposed to rush into black Oakland and start a riot. The plot failed, the cop leak said, because the radicals failed to follow through.

There probably was an ambush. The Oakland cops have been trying to ambush Panthers for months, and they particularly wanted Eldridge Cleaver, whose writing was rapidly gaining him a national audience and whose mature leadership was helping to turn the Panthers from a bunch of angry kids into a closely knit and carefully organized group with a genuine political program for the ghetto. Whites seem to find this hard to believe—but the Oakland cops *want* a riot. They think they can put it down and knock off the community's leadership in the process.

Murdered. Pursued by cops who were determined to get at least Eldridge, the eight took refuge in the basement of a house, and the cops laid siege. There were at

17-year-old Bobby Hutton didn't. He was too embarrassed. And as it happened he emerged first, into the floodlights, his hands high over his head, and walked toward the waiting policemen. When he was well out in the open, one of them yelled, "Run, boy!" Hutton froze, ter-

Maybe you have to be black and live in a ghetto, patrolled by white racist policemen, to understand how the Black Panthers came to be and why they talk the way they do. Maybe it's hard for white Americans to understand how there can be bumper stickers reading "Free Huey" when Panther Huey P. Newton is charged with the murder of a policeman. But anybody should be able to understand cold-blooded murder.

The really difficult thing to understand is why white America can be shocked by a murder in Memphis and ignore one in Oakland, why white America can express horror when Mayor Daley *talks* about shooting, and demonstrate only apathy when the Oakland police, without even arson or looting to give them an excuse, actually *do* shoot to kill—and succeed.

GENE MARINE

GENE MARINE

(Gene Marine is a Senior Editor of Ramparts.)

REPORT ON THE UNDERGROUND

From the table on a raised stage oddly covered with a white cloth so that it resembled an improvised altar, the chairman of the Boston College Theology Department (only a few of whom came to the meetings), Father William Leonard, S.J., true to the setting, announced the rules of the game. The papers would be read, the announced discussants would discuss them, and then questions or statements would be heard from the first three rows in the gym where the invited participants were seated, clearly identified by white badges. Everyone else in the room was to be a silent observer. When this clearly hierarchical arrangement was protested (by a member of Emmaus House, one of the privileged *periti*) as undemocratic, the organizers of the meeting then opened ques-

On the first evening, the order and discipline to be characteristic of the later session was disturbed by an unplanned change in program. Father Rocco Caporale, having arrived at the meeting with a paper summarizing his sociological research on international "group churches or nuclear church forms," was inserted into the program at the last moment at his request. Chairman Father Joseph Fichter, ruddy, humorous and firmly dictatorial, determined that only by instant condensation of this paper, and the regularly scheduled one by William Osborne of St. John's University, could the time element be properly adjusted. Result of the restriction was an inauspicious jumble of poorly oriented and developed data and argument which did no justice to the prepared papers presented to the press.

Father Caporale's facts were interesting, and provoked quick, pleased response. (It was noticeable from the very first that this was the kind of audience that could be relied upon to laugh at any mention in any context of such nouns as bishop's action [or inaction], third orders, rosary beads, Pius IX, Thomas Aquinas, chancery officials, etc.) His team, investigating in France, Chile and the United States, uncovered 50 underground groups in Chile and France, and several hundred in the U.S. One was found, by accident, right in the center of the papal city itself

(appreciative laughter here). From these findings he characterized the "group" churches as "disorganization-alized" groups of Catholics, not Catholic groups, liturgically rather than socially oriented, grass-rooted middle-class, college-educated, professionally employed, and cosmopolitan. Discerning differences internationally, he found these to be mainly in the degree of official disapproval or sanction exercised upon the groups, and in the degree of involvement in social concerns.

Then William Osborne, another sociologist (the heavy specter of this discipline stalked the three-day sessions; the wispy figment of theology seemed relegated to the back corners of the gym if it was there at all), relying somewhat heavily on scholastic terms and the jargon of the trade felt that a "new humane and religious synthesis may emerge from the present conflict provided the reformers do not grow weary of the conflict." Parenthetically it might be said that much of the language and imagery of the meeting had the tone of academe. Phrases like "topology of religious and ecclesiastical reform," "core ritual," "integrative function of social form," "gradual restriction of accepted norms," "conceptualize the phenomenon," "demographic locus," and literary images of the Trojan horse, guerrilla fighter, and nagging gadfly rang out over the room with all the authoritative limitations of such special usage.

Discussants and the *periti* showed a tendency to ignore the paper they had just heard; they dealt with their own thoughts, so that, in most cases, they metamorphosized into minor addressants, and the diversity of their views became symptomatic of the meeting as a whole. Early in the questioning from the floor the first challenge to the academic tone of the papers was made. Father George Hafner in a business suit (this was standard dress for the avant-garde clergy except for those who affected white or black turtle-neck sweaters) wondered at the attempts to "define" the movement, to put the new phenomenon of the underground church "into a box." Strong basic, simplistic, non-academic, and anti-intellectual appeals began the first evening to contrast sharply with the sociological, linguistic and theological approaches. Osborne "testified," in the familiar manner of the Southern Baptist-revival meeting: "For the first time (in the underground church) I began to experience the presence of Christ." George Hafner turned his back on the platform and addressed the silent pews: "Let it happen, let it be. Don't fight it, don't define it. Next thing you know we'll be building a school for it!"

On the next two days, despite carefully formulated, literate position papers, notably by Rosemary Ruether, Mary Daly, and Father Robert Hovda, the same cleavage was clear. Led with fine, angry, passionate fury by the movement's baptized, Father Malcolm Boyd, the activists grew more and more impatient with the technical, theoretical formulations, or attempts at formulations. Boyd, like Hafner the night before, told the group more than

once that obviously it knew *nothing* about the real underground church, clearly had never been *in* it or *near* it. His fierce experiential approach—almost every sentence began with either "I talked with some guys at Yale last week until three in the morning," or "I was the only white priest with four black ministers and . . ." as if this singularity, and the early-in-the-morning syndrome, were new Christian virtues—and his scorn of the theorizers represented a real fear that the intellectuals were moving in on his primitive turf, overstressing the underground church's relation to formal worship and church structures. He mourned the absence from the meeting of blacks and non-Catholics in the face of the post-ecumenical nature of the underground church. He feared that the academic and theological emphasis of the conference was a disservice to "alienated men and women who have been maimed and dehumanized by the official church."

Mary Daly responded to his complaint that common people "experience the underground church, they do not talk about it," by labeling Boyd's approach dogmatic. He reminded her of Cardinal Spellman, she said, and then, in one of the rare moments of humor in the long day, he replied, "and you remind me of the flying nun!" Again, the complexity of Mary Daly's remarks, her conclusion that "the theology which is growing out of the underground church finds it necessary to dispense with trivia and to focus on . . . the striving toward a higher level of human existence and toward a hidden but living God" came up hard against the basic experientialism of the activists.

Much debate centered around the *name* of what is happening. Derived, seemingly, from the French resistance and therefore, Father John Burton said, suggesting guerrilla warfare against the established Church, a variety of substitutes were offered. Rosemary Ruether wanted it called the "free" church (a term she preferred for its historical roots) which faced not into the established church but instead into the world. "Let us move out of the ecclesiastical bag," she urged. Father McBrien thought "the underground" would suffice for the phenomenon without "church," especially in view of its secular, social emphasis and its tendency to deny the centrality of the liturgy in the real life of the Christian. Others called it the "profane" church, the "group" church. Someone from the audience, in an attempt at non-nomenclature, rose to protest "free" church: "I am not in the free church because then I would not be free." Malcolm Boyd clung to his own "thing," the underground church, "because unless the revolutionary movement remains considerably underground I do not see how it can possibly remain free."

Beyond these titular semantics, there was present among the participants and observers sharp polarities of opinion about the present state of things, and prediction for the future. Doubters saw no special hope in the offerings of the underground church: size, place, or the freedom of its

spirit would not grant it a value denied to established worship. Far away, on the other hand, a body of opinion thought nothing whatever could be hoped for within the structure that had been somewhat restored but not renewed (Father Hovda's terms). Those in the middle of the two saw the chance of change in the structure only in the operation of liturgical experiments until the "above-ground" level could be influenced. Someone from the floor did not like "the sarcasm" he had heard directed against the institutional church; there was a complaint from the floor that too little was being said about the peace movement. There were those who wanted to preserve the cultic figure of the priest, those who wanted the distinction between laity and clergy reduced to function, not degree of dedication, and those who wanted no part of clerical distinction, like Rosemary Lauer who suggested that "we might burn Roman collars" so as to have something to celebrate on Sunday.

Dr. John Donovan claimed the underground church had failed to understand the concept of Christian community, "and didn't want to." A Union Theological seminarian thought *real* liturgy (for his generation) was more likely to be the passing around of "joints" in the dark, with incense used only to drown out the odor of marijuana. The view that the liturgy, even concern for renewal liturgy, was a dead issue among the young was heard again and again at the sessions. Paul Sprehe of Oklahoma's John XXIII Community hoped that underground-church participants were not being taken in by "the romance of the thing," and Gordon Zahn saw the dangerous possibility of a particularism: "Racial churches, national churches, each coming up with its own thing." And so it went, pull-devil, pull-baker, with no general agreement as to hope or method or present position, but rather with a sense of need for something, of discontent with much of what is and of last-ditch hope that reform and renewal could still happen intramurally.

Perhaps the most significant and carefully prepared paper, close to the spirit and thought of her recent book, was offered by theologian Rosemary Ruether. Tracing the general disappointment of high hopes in Vatican II, she noted a lack of interest among "the more *avant-garde* Catholics and especially free-church Catholics to reform and democratize the structure." She saw the current critical state of failure as a result of the hierarchy's underestimation of the revolution its words at Vatican II had unleashed; now the struggle has become critical because "we have not yet accepted the radical pluralism that is becoming our reality." Crucial too is the schism that cuts the free church away from the establishment in its "quest for the authentic Christian community," its desperate search for a home within the old homestead by renovation of the structure itself so that it will become representational rather than dictatorial.

Twice, the main underground-church current was diverted by little meanders. Officials of Emmaus House

in New York held a press conference to announce the formation of a communication center for "the freedom movement" at Emmaus House, a place where the "lonely" experimental groups can learn of each other, and other groups can have a place to come to for information. . . . And a Task Force on Women and Religion, one of the real offshoots of the free church, met briefly to plan a further meeting to fight discrimination based on sex, a condition "destructive of religious values," the *ad hoc* group's flyer declared.

Sunday morning's eucharistic celebration was the least well attended of all the sessions. Traditional in form ("no balloons or movies or banners," one disappointed participant remarked), its hymns were taken from the *People's Mass Book*, one of the readings from St. Augustine. Only later did we learn that, at the same time, many underground masses were being celebrated in hotel and motel rooms by participants and observers of the sessions. At one gathering, a Catholic priest and a Baptist minister, concelebrating, sent down to the coffee shop for rolls to use at the liturgy.

On this last day most of the papers were shorter, in deference, I thought, to our aural weariness. Even doubts seemed to be expressed with less rancor. William Marra of *The Wanderer* unhappily reminded his fellows at the press table that Kierkegaard had said: "If the movement is everything, the moment is nothing." Father Richard McBrien sounded a low-key warning that "only an underground church which will work within the theological context of reformation and renewal can be a remnant of promise in the larger community of hope." A few participants and observers sat through the last session under the blessed dispensation of sleep. Sister Mary Aloysius Schaldenbrand pleaded with us not to allow the movement to become domesticated by referring it too readily to the Establishment, while Father Theodore Steeman found in the underground church a hopeful sign that there are people who take Vatican II seriously. The final note was of faith in the multiplicity of forms, places and roles, in the new roots in the real and now-alienated world, that the underground church represented. As the meeting was about to be formally adjourned, a mysterious, guru-like figure dressed in Indian clothing, a slight man with shoulder-length hair and a full, wild beard stood up to offer "a prophecy," something about next year in which, "the underground church will surface and be communioned or tribalized." No one knew quite what he meant, but we left the gym together in a spirit of charity even for the odd prophet. As we drove on to the Turnpike in the evening darkness someone in our car remembered that Martin Buber had once said: "There is no such thing as seeking God for there is nothing in which he could not be found."

DORIS GRUMBACH

(Doris Grumbach is a member of the faculty at the College of Saint Rose and the author, most recently, of *The Company She Kept*, a study of Mary McCarthy.)

REBECCA WEST: DISTURBER OF THE PEACE



No abnormal bump of reverence for anyone

DACHINE RAINER

The Oxford dictionary defines "lynx" as "... animal of the cat tribe with tufted ear tips, short tail, spotted fur and proverbially keen sight." "Lynx" is the pseudonym Cecily Isobel Fairfield (Rebecca West) chose in 1928 for a volume called *Lions and Lambs*, miniature political and literary portraits, illustrated by David Low. Only one of several pseudonyms, it is very apposite, and would be my favorite, were I not entranced by the first and most enduring of her disguises—Rebecca West (a name generally believed to derive from Ibsen's heroine in *Rosmersholm*, that marvelously misguided fanatic. Miss West denies this, claiming it is "a case of collision not collusion" between Ibsen and herself). Cecily Fairfield was a student in 1910 in the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (then Tree's Academy) and had a fleeting career as an actress; it is as an actress that she appears in *Heritage*, purportedly, a personal memoir by her son, Anthony West.

But if to the definition of Lynx one were to add: fierce, even murderous, it would be partial still, because one cannot begin to think of nearly 60 years of Rebecca West's writing without due regard for her wit and compassion, elegance, vigor and eloquence, authoritativeness and commitment, fervor and heroism—all qualities at such a premium today that she has become the rarest, the most nearly extinct of that once flourishing species, artist and critic. Nor can one look at Lynx without observing that despite her age—she was 75 last year—her physical movements are as swift and graceful—catlike—as is the startling speed and beautiful ingenuity of her mind.

Lions and Lambs, the epitome of her most radical and controversial, contains essays on Conrad, Churchill, H. G.

Wells, A. A. Milne, G. B. Shaw, Belloc and Chesterton, Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett ... economical, devastating, most certainly written by a lynx. I sometimes think it is my favorite among her non-fiction (which runs to a dozen volumes and hundreds of uncollected magazine articles) but then I re-read *Strange Necessity* or *Ending in Earnest*, both published immediately after *Lions and Lambs* in 1929 and 1931 respectively, and I change my mind, preferring one or the other of these.

In one of her rare personal observations, Miss West wrote in 1945: "... a left wing journalist ... is what I have been ever since I was 18 years of age ... For over 30 years I have been upholding the principles of the French Revolution and attacking all governments who seemed to me to be hostile to the political and economic freedom of the masses ...". She finds no dichotomy in her attitudes and is perplexed by her altered public image; many of my generation find her later political observations as disturbing as her earlier ones were to the Establishment of her youth.

Not yet 19, Cecily Fairfield opened fire with her first sentence in the Nov. 30, 1911, issue of *The Freewoman*: "There are two kinds of imperialists—Imperialists and Bloody Imperialists." (What a nice, mild, Jane Austenish name—Cecily Fairfield—to append to such a thundering entrance!)

By 1912 Rebecca West was a staff writer on *The Clarion*, the socialist newspaper (but of so dazzling a hue no contemporary socialist would care to claim it) and contributing marvelously inflammatory articles on feminism, socialism and capitalism: these were witty, indignant, erudite. She shared her columns with such professional international radicals as Robert Blatchford, the editor, Hyndman, Clara Zetkin, H. G. Wells, Peter Kropotkin ... and the poetry of Swinburne.

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The Clarion's editorials extolled anarchism, advertised issues of *Freedom* (the London anarchist paper still in existence, although I daresay Miss West would these days neither care to, nor be asked to contribute to it); the paper issued notices about the Tolstoi exhibition in Bond Street (Miss West is disturbingly irrational in her dislike of Tolstoi, perhaps amalgamating his sanctimony and priggery—qualities she particularly loathes—with his genius; it is quite possible to separate these, and in fact Tolstoi generally does so for us).

Female Emancipation

The Clarion supported the activities of the syndicalists, believed in the idea of the general strike and advocated the use of direct action for political issues; it supported the most extreme wing of the suffragists (the ones that chained themselves to lampposts and made public nuisances of themselves everywhere) and aided political prisoners both inside and outside this movement.

In a brilliant, intemperate article: "The Labour Party's Treachery" (subtitled "What is Lloyd George?") inspired by a brutal assault on the suffragists at Llanystumdwy, Wales, Miss West cries out, "Courage requires an audience of heroes . . . There is no limit to what the public—the great mass of tired, weak souls, broken and killed by the capitalist struggle—will stand."

I believe that those of us who postdate the suffragist movement cannot possibly imagine its political importance. Only a few years ago, on the occasion of his 90th birthday, Bertrand Russell observed that the emancipation of women was one of the three most significant and beneficial events during his entire lifetime. For Rebecca West it was not only a trying ground on which she learned to exercise her talent—for she seems to have sprung nearly fully developed, as if from some improbable marriage between her two mentors, H. G. Wells and G. B. Shaw—but it was an opportunity for the public expression of her unique genius.

Placing herself among "we socialists," Rebecca West exhorted women not to confine themselves to the suffragist movement *per se*, but to become active in the basic sociological issues involved in a class society. "Let women make haste to become lions, and fearlessly attack the social system . . ." She expressed her contempt for government, pointing to its bias against the poor; she was opposed to various of its activities; of the Divorce Commission—a burning issue in 1912—she remarked that it "consisted mainly of people impervious to ideas."

When confronted by Lord Roberts and conscription in 1912, *The Clarion* had a lead article: "Invasion the Lesser Evil." (These beliefs—many if not all Miss West expressed or shared—should by contemporary analogy make her presence imperative in Trafalgar Square during anti-nuclear sit-down protests; one will not find her there. What keeps her away is optimism: she doesn't think world

nuclear war possible—a curious lapse in someone accustomed to railing against the perfidy of some men and the dangerous stupidity of others.)

The Clarion consistently predicted and opposed the First World War, until it succumbed to patriotism at its outbreak, leaving Rebecca West only momentarily without an outlet—as the socialists were to be left without a cause forever; but for a couple of years she was apprenticed to this atmosphere of strife and doom, an atmosphere that admirably suited the content of her reflections but contrasted with her style. For she rose above the clamor by a refreshing exercise of wit; and it was not merely that specialized rhetorical wit employed by revolutionaries. Her wit is, like her cookery, light and delicious; unlike the latter, it can be annihilating.

Her wit must have appealed to G. B. Shaw. On Sept. 4, 1916, he wrote from the Fabian Socialist Summer School to Mrs. Patrick Campbell:

"In Glastonbury I tried to fascinate a young provincial woman of 21 [she was 23] a mere local amateur prima donna, who will, when she is 35, fascinate the Empire, after leaving most of its households in ruins. When I arrived here I struck up a precipitous flirtation with Rebecca West. Rebecca is an extremely clever young woman whose critical writings in the papers have been startling everyone for the last few years. Rebecca can handle a pen as brilliantly as ever I could, and much more savagely. We fell into one another's arms intellectually and artistically; and if I had not turned 60 and been afraid of being ridiculous . . . etc."

But Rebecca West had already tangled with Shaw two years earlier. In November, 1914, in the founding issue of an American magazine—*The New Republic*—in her first year "of age" she had contributed an article, "The Duty of Harsh Criticism." We have, she chastised, ". . . the duty of listening to our geniuses in a disrespectful manner." Because she had no "abnormal bump of reverence" for anyone, she dared write of two established men of letters, both her elders by more than 30 years and both to become, with her, regular contributors to *The New Republic*:

"There are two great writers of today who greatly need correction . . . When Mr. Shaw advances rattling his long lance to wit and Mr. Wells follows, plump and oiled with the fun of things, they seem Don Quixote and Sancho Panza [this is funny because of course it follows their appearance: the first, tall and lean, the other, short and round]. Mr. Wells wants to drive false knights from the earth and cut the stupidity and injustice out of the spiritual stuff of mankind . . . Mr. Shaw believes too blindly in his own mental activities; he imagines that if he continues to secrete thought he must be getting on . . ."

About Wells she wrote elsewhere: "One had . . . the luck to be young just as the most bubbling creative mind

... since the days of Leonardo da Vinci was showing its form."

H. G. Wells, probably the most intelligent and imaginative writer, and Shaw, certainly the most dazzling stylist of this period, were her mentors. She excelled Wells often in style, for which she must be at least somewhat indebted to an appreciation of Shaw. Although brilliant and outrageous, she was occasionally less quick-witted but less superficial than the latter. Indeed, she excelled Shaw as a political thinker; she was subtler and more logical. That—without discrediting her native endowment—one may attribute in part to her close association with Wells. While we are briefly on this subject of influences. I think Ford Madox Ford is owed some credit; and honors for the most independent literary criticism of an epoch, the most original and just, the most illuminating and vivid, is shared between them.

A decade later (1928, *The Bookman*) she had another go at Shaw, reviewing his *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*. What a patronizing title! and I think its condescension angered her, for Miss West questions Shaw's presumption that women cannot follow an ordinary book on this subject, but require a special one. This is not, Miss West points out, because they are less intelligent but because abstract concepts—Shaw's faulty ones among these—exist at variance to reality, to what women know by experience. (Miss West never suffered from that shrill, hooting feminism that afflicted so many of the overly articulate and zealous women of that period.) Shaw's Celtic irrationality must be exasperating to anyone with a logical mind, and she demolishes sundry of his ideas, preyed upon by statistical fallacies, like the subsidization theory. He must have been furious.

During the '20s Rebecca West contributed literary, travel, political essays to *The New Republic*, *The Bookman*, *Living Age* . . . These, sensitive, filled with passionate intensity and heroically embattled, would ensure her place in literature, were she not entitled to it on a half dozen other counts. Some of these—including essays on Proust, Ford Madox Ford, the Sitwells, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Toller, Max Beerbohm, Shaw, Wells, Bennett, Galsworthy, Evelyn Waugh were collected into *Strange Necessity* and *Ending in Earnest*. She was one of the earliest people to support Joyce and Lawrence (more than 30 years later she was called upon to testify in the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*). Her *Elegy* written on Lawrence's death is the kind of memorial that Valéry's is to Proust, an elegaic that celebrates, a prose *Lycidas*.

Rebecca West is one of the rare critics who creates a distinct sense of personality so that we recognize that she is writing about someone and not about an idea of something. Both the nature of man and the value of art are of such living concern—they are her "strange necessity"—that she never forgets that the one is produced by the other. This has made her always unwilling to accept—for herself or others—anything less than total dedication.

None of her evaluations expressed popular sentiments, but it was on behalf of the young Edmund Wilson that she engaged T. S. Eliot in a particularly fierce battle of some duration and with him she took on the whole of the New Humanism, its chief exponents Professors More and Babbitt and their army of spiritless and conforming satellites. Here are excerpts from skirmishes:

"Those who have preferred familiarity with Mr. Eliot's work to blind admiration for it know that the part of his criticism that repays attention either is slight and charming and purely impressionistic . . . or consists of reproductions rather than developments of the ideas of Professor More and Professor Babbitt. The rest is a flustered search for coherence disingenuously disguised by a style which suggests that he has found it . . . authors have to fear that remarkable power of misunderstanding which has led him into certain comic misreadings . . . Beside this literary personality Edmund Wilson does not show to disadvantage."

Or:

"... Mr. Eliot is a writer who, so far as his prose writings are concerned, relies on a declaration of a noble nostalgia for authority and tradition as a substitute for thought; and that he formed a school of writers who imitated him in this trick, and succeeded by this device in exalting themselves and casting suspicion on those who were too busy thinking to follow this impressive ritual . . ."

Contentious prose? Rather! Honest, accurate and necessary? Certainly. Perhaps because I dislike Eliot's prose (and literary personality) and only rarely find his verse respectable, is my rapport here with Miss West—intemperate and sporting—so delicious. But can one imagine how many more people it would enrage today when cognizance of its truth could deprive the proliferating hordes of American university critics of a livelihood?

Miss West is entitled to her savage and ridiculing wit by virtue of being the happiest credit to Ezra Pound's dictum: don't criticize if you can't do it better yourself. Along with her obdurate vigor, she is in possession of a remarkable scholarship. In particular, during the Lent Term of 1929 Miss West gave a lecture in a series *Tradition and Experiment* at the City Literary Institute of London; her brief history of criticism is unlikely to be excelled.

I should like to point out that so challenging a defender of artistic integrity is a civic asset and an obstacle to any sort of authoritarian thinking, whatever his supposed or actual politics may be. Rebecca West has long known—and behaved as if she knows—that the artist as a moral human being is the chief security of any free society. Her permanent warfare on behalf of artistic integrity was—and is—every bit as important as her continuing political battles. In 1933 she paid tribute to a woman considered one of the most dangerous ever known:

"Emma Goldman is one of the great people of the world. She is a mountain of integrity. I do not know how one would set about destroying Emma, except by frequent charges of high explosive, carried on for a very long time; and I think the dust of the thus disintegrated Emma, borne through the air, would still continue to utter the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Mysticism and Skepticism

Even as if to confound us utterly, Miss West, in the seemingly unalarming guise of mystic, is on the side of the angels, that is to say, on the side of individual men and against the deranged mores of our time. In *Letter to a Grandfather* (1933, under the pseudonym C.B. written in mysterious accents, as though she had been seized and transported) she observes, "The advance of science must mean a certain loss to humanity as a whole; . . . what good would Dante be to me if he had written *The Divine Comedy* not in *terza rima* but in a drunken ant's script of mathematical symbols?" But how dare one in the twentieth century be for Dante—and against science? Her skepticism is similar to that of another unusual critic, W. H. Auden, who points out in an interpretation of Iago that there is some knowledge it is not useful—and even dangerous—to acquire.

In 1941 she became a member of the Clairvoyant Society. (The poltergeist scene in her novel, *The Fountain Overflows*, could only have been written by a witch; and for the benefit of believers in reincarnation it may be interesting to know that Rebecca West was one of the four witches tried and condemned during the Worcester Witchcraft trials in 1647.) It is rewarding to compare her definition of a mystic:

"A mystic distrusts all institutions . . . He fears lest the thickness of their walls shall prevent man from hearing when God speaks to him . . . We see why the institution has so often cried out, throughout history, in accusation against the mystic: 'This man is telling the truth concerning eternity; but he is in error concerning time, and it is in time that we have to do our present duty' . . . But the mystic has often been able to answer: 'Because I have sought the truth in eternity, I have alone had the courage to tell the truth in time'."

with her more directly political rebuke to the Liberals:

" . . . in ideological warfare liberals cannot afford to be silly or untruthful. The other side can be these things without losing their dynamic power, for they are not thereby betraying their own creed. But if we abandon our sense of reality and our honesty, we are false to our vows and we become disguised reactionaries, contriving the defeat of the forces we pretend to serve."

Are these not saying the same thing? Before that in-

dividual true to himself, let all institutions beware. Liberals detest her. Conservatives, when they remember her dangerous originality, regard her quixotic allegiances with trepidation. Neither liberal nor conservative, I am free to admire her range of extraordinary accomplishments, to respect her courage—the meanwhile remembering her admonition: "the duty of listening to our geniuses in a disrespectful manner"—and to cherish her person.

In 1955 Rebecca West was appointed Dame of the British Empire, undoubtedly for the wrong reasons. (The reasons for awards of any sort are almost invariably "wrong", but here the honor must be regarded ironically at counterpoint to any accurate estimate of her contribution to letters. Whether fiction, political journalism, criticism, psychology, travel—I have mentioned so little of her vast output—these works are in celebration of or a tribute to the nature of man, and their greatness exists in proportion to their direct or indirect opposition to institutions the British loosely term "the Establishment.")

Astonishingly little has been written about her. This is partly because of the extensive unavailability of more than a half century of her work. This, one of the literary scandals of our time, is tardily and only very partially resolved by her publishers; not only does most of the first three decades of her work continue out of print, but the bulk of her uncollected writing—much in defunct magazines, some bombed out in the British Museum Library—presents serious problems, not in the least improved by Miss West's keeping of files. It is doubtful if more than a handful of people appreciate exactly the extent of her contribution to English Letters. It is awe-inspiring.

Neither political nor literary critics, when infrequently they do try, can cope with her. Her writing is disarmingly lucid but her ideas are curious, complex and not easily assimilated. She is exasperating. She is an enigma. She doesn't fit conveniently. Neville Braybrooke took one of the earliest cracks at her: "Miss West is as yet somewhat uncertain of her own feet and much more certain of the feet of other people." (1927), and his few snide comments ensure that he shall go down in literary history much in the way George Moore did in the plastic arts when he said that if there was one Impressionist who would never be heard of again, his name was certainly Renoir!

Meanwhile she carries on—I hope unperturbed. Her reviews in the *Sunday Telegraph* continue to sum up a book or an entire career more succinctly and astutely—and often hilariously—than anyone. And in only the last decade she has emerged by virtue of *The Fountain Overflows* (1955), *Parthenope* (1956) and *The Birds Fall Down* (1966) as belonging to that small, precious company—the writers of great fiction.

Mysterious, difficult, these latest works, most particularly the last, excite controversy. Rebecca West is generously blessed with the raging fires of genius.

THE WORLD OF LYTTON STRACHEY

• • • • •
The pundit, the wit, the model biographer, has sunk into shadow

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

I only knew Lytton Strachey at the end of his life. At that time the Bloomsbury world of which he was a leader felt itself in need of new recruits, and I, newly down from Oxford, was for a year or two considered promising. It was therefore arranged that I go to supper with Strachey, bear-led by Raymond Mortimer. Unluckily I had chosen that evening to invite a girl for drinks, and by the time ten o'clock struck—the hour of my appointment—I knew that any more drink would be a serious mistake. I reached Strachey's house with decorum, to find that in honor of the occasion he had opened a bottle of champagne. A second bottle stood by.

Strachey was exactly as he appears in the famous portrait by Henry Lamb; bearded, spectacled, draped so in his chair that his legs looked infinitely long and flowing, flexible as hose-pipes. He seemed vaguely dispirited and his hesitations were not dispelled by my murmuring that if I was late it was because I had been entertaining a girl—though he might have felt better if he could have known that later she was to marry the biographer of Maynard Keynes. Anyway, the bottle was opened, and after that, so far I was concerned, darkness fell until I rang up Raymond Mortimer in the morning, to find out if anything disastrous had happened. He was a little somber. He said, "I suppose it was all right. But you never stopped talking till two in the morning, and whenever Lytton tried to put in a word you held up your hand for silence. Lytton is not used to that."

Time has its revenges; and the silence to which I briefly condemned my host has gathered more thickly year by year. The pundit, the *chou-chou* of dowagers, the wit, the model biographer, has sunk into shadow. The nastiest words in the critical lexicon are fished out against him. He is a belle-lettrist, a romantic, a cheat constitutionally incapable of reporting a straight truth. One fatal remark to the effect that Dr. Arnold's legs were too short has touched off a train of vituperation against him. Dr. Arnold's legs were *not* too short. Nobody knows anything much about Dr. Arnold's legs. One might venture the thought that they ought to have been too short, that the accusation is, at least psychologically, exactly right. But the fact remains, if Strachey is not to be trusted here, he is suspect elsewhere too. Even the splendid closure of his

masterpiece, *Queen Victoria*, counting over the Queen's dying thoughts, has to be rejected as an invention. We do not know what Queen Victoria was thinking as she lay behind the drawn curtains of Osborne House, and so, in a sense, Strachey has no right to prompt her on our behalf.

All the same, he deserves to be remembered as one who, if he did not revive the art of biography, at least killed the three-volume official Life-and-Letters. Whether he would have approved the scale on which his own biographer has assessed him is another matter. It seemed excessive when Lord David Cecil devoted 500 pages to another exquisite, Max Beerbohm. These present volumes (*Lytton Strachey*, Vols. I & II, by Michael Holroyd. Holt, Rinehart. \$21.95) are nearly three times as long. True, they are more a conversation-piece than a portrait. The Stracheys alone make a remarkable clan enough, and round them there gathered a group of writers, painters and critics unique in British literary history. No wonder Lytton was drawn toward people like Madame du Deffand. The world in which himself, Virginia Woolf, Keynes, Lady Ottoline Morrell and Bertrand Russell starred had much in common with the talkative world of eighteenth-century Paris.

Still, it is as a writer that he will stand or fall. And as a writer he is unlikely to become fashionable once more until taste changes again in favor of pleasure. What is immediately striking about the essays in *Eminent Victorians* and *Books and Characters* is that the aim of each piece is to convey delight: not only Lytton's often ironical delight in his subject but in its presentation. From the standpoint of the 1960's this presentation appears mannered. We are always conscious that much trouble has gone into turning a phrase just so; there is a hand-written flavor to the paragraphs; Lytton certainly would never have learned to use a typewriter. But the delight is infectious to anybody with an ear for prose, and his writing, if carefully calculated, seldom slips into "fine writing": at worst it is, like himself, a trifle spinsterish.

One can deduce from it that he had a rare gift for friendship. His style, like his attentive care for those few whom he truly liked, is companionable. Total accuracy was never in his line. He read immensely, but with the eye of a novelist rather than an exact scholar. This, if it threatened his fidelity to history, gave him a dazzling gift of evocation. What matter if the Gordon of reality differs from Strachey's Gordon? Any willful tampering with fact can be matched by a sudden flash of intuition or a ripening

ALAN PRYCE-JONES, British essayist and critic, was formerly editor of the London Times Literary Supplement.

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sense of judgment. It is clear, for instance, that he began with the intention of putting Queen Victoria in her place but slowly came to mingle affection with respect; likewise that he rejected a first view of Florence Nightingale as the sainted Lady with a Lamp and recognized in her a most formidable dragon.

He was at his best when he wrote of things French. No Anglo-Saxon has written so well of Racine, and he put to good use an instinctive sympathy with Voltaire. He would have wished to echo the latter's command to *écraser l'infâme*, but a mixture of bad health and a missish temperament held him back. He was, in all things, a miniaturist. His *Queen Victoria* excels by selection rather than inclusion; and when he attempted to expand a miniature too far, as in *Elizabeth and Essex*, his skill deserted him.

Such a man is extremely hard to write about. Mr. Holroyd does his best to be fair, and he adduces a vast amount of fascinating detail which brings to life an intellectual England now totally dead. There have been no successors to the houseparties at Garsington, immortalized by Aldous Huxley in *Crome Yellow*, to Lady Colefax's luncheon-parties and Mrs. Asquith's weekends at Sutton Courtenay; no successor to Lady Cunard. Very few echoes of Bloomsbury talk still survive. And in all this Lytton Strachey was a commanding figure, at any rate during the last ten years of his life. It is presumably their Bloomsbury passion for truth-telling which has led some of those still alive to permit such a huge disinterment of ancient scandal and flimflam. Mr. Holroyd is not of an age to have known most of his characters in person, and the impression he gives of them is decidedly rum. Why, one wonders, have so many elderly people allowed themselves to be depicted, 40 and 50 years ago, as a bunch of frantic queens of every sex? In portraying Lytton himself, Mr. Holroyd is too apt to take for gospel what was sometimes meant as a joke. For years Lytton exchanged with Keynes a series of titillating letters—the expressions of a fantasy life as much as, or more than, a reflection of what actually occurred. In his biography of Keynes, Sir Roy Harrod never touches on this side of Keynes' existence, and in depicting Lytton as always desperately in love with some young man or other, Mr. Holroyd makes no allowance for what was (according to his contemporaries) often no more than the outpouring of a bizarre humor.

The spectacle of an in-group closely involved with its own problems to the exclusion of all else is always maddening to outsiders, and when the in-group has so high a ratio of talent as that of Bloomsbury in the 1920's, it is likely to arouse a double hostility. Lytton Strachey was not one to suffer fools; he was very easily bored at the best of times; and he contrived to mass around himself a perplexing tangle of relationships, patterned after the example of Schnitzler's *Reigen*. Mr. Holroyd plods pertinaciously from bedside to bedside, constantly unveiling the same face on a different pillow. He also spends too much time in analysis of Strachey's work, as if it were Gibbonian in

scope rather than a set of ironic excursions into human oddity.

As such, the handful of books and critical essays which are all we have remain remarkably fresh. They have very few rivals in their field: Dean Burgon's *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, perhaps and Geoffrey Scott's *Portrait of Zelig* complete the list. The method of such biographies is hardly more than an elaboration of John Aubrey's technique, which is to take one significant look at the subject rather than work right through it—a raising of gossip, in other words, to the power of literature.

But as well as an amateur of the human picturesque, Lytton Strachey was also an excellent critic, who had read for pleasure rather than for pedantry. His book reviews are models of their kind, even when—as in those he wrote for the *Spectator*—he found himself forced to follow an editorial line not his own. Certainly he was marked by a view of life which is not likely to recur: the view from a large London house, dominated by a commanding mother, then from Cambridge in a uniquely brilliant period. Once on his feet—and by that time he was nearly 30—he assumed, as a matter of right, that one only knew intelligent or beautiful people, that one's relatives are born to sparkle or command, that there is always enough money to do as one likes, even if the money belongs to someone else, that life has no worse hazards to negotiate than indigestion and unsatisfied love. As if to confirm these views, people followed his moods with attention, they showered devotion on him, they grieved when he was ill or peevish.

And the end of it all? 1,300 pages at one extreme and a number of more or less courteous dismissals at the other. But at least the books of Lytton Strachey are likely to remain among those which one is delighted to find in a guest room. After 40 years their seduction is unimpaired. And there are graver historians, of larger reputation, and profounder critics too, of which that is not true.



MARTIN WHEELER

ODE TO A SEA BIRD

I heard a sea gull
shining
and an orchard
within his darkness,
rich as wisteria
and roses

I heard the sea
in the bird
and the red waves
barreling,

and the boy's cry
and a day of gold.

HARVEY COX

learned enough to read my own book when it appears. Portuguese will have to wait, I'm afraid. One language world at a time.

Incidentally *The Secular City Debate* edited by Dan Callahan, which appeared in October, 1966, has now sold about 45,000 copies. (Dan gets those royalties, not me.) The idea of books about books has certainly caught on. I got into the act myself with a collection of reviews and criticisms of Joe Fletcher's *Situation Ethics* (*The Situation Ethics Debate*, Westminster Press). Recently a delayed collection of critical articles on C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* was published by Beacon Press. Compiled by G. William Domhoff and Hoyt B. Ballard, it is entitled *C. Wright Mills and the Power Elite*. Also books with the word "secular" in the title continue to proliferate. The two most recent arrivals are *The Secular Congregation* by Robert Raines (Harper's) and *The Secular Saint* by Allan R. Brockway (Doubleday). Frankly I think it's time we turned to another subject.

What Does It All Mean?

I've speculated at length in the past on what the sales of *The Secular City* and other such books mean. It means in part that there is today a growing group of literate, theologically interested lay people who want to read for themselves and do their own thinking on religious subjects. They won't read the Pabulum that used to be ground out for them by religious publishing houses, the "layman's guide" to this and that. Yet they can't quite wade through Karl Rahner's major works or make much sense out of any of the material theologians write for other theologians. I think this group of people (in the publishing trade they are called a "market") will grow. They will become increasingly participants and not just passive observers in the theological conversation. It's part of laicization, and if it really takes hold theology will never be quite the same again.

The international appeal of such books is an even more interesting phenomenon. It shows, I think, that men of faith throughout the world face very much the same set of problems and opportunities. The urbanization and secularization of society is a fact of life, not just in the West but everywhere. The ecumenical conversation in the future should take place not just across fading denominational lines, but among people who despite different national and denominational heritages face situations which will require the best thinking all of us together can bring to bear.

My own thinking recently has led me to look more carefully into one of the words on the cover subtitle of *The Secular City*, the word "celebration." I want to do a book on festivity and fantasy in theological perspective. I don't have a title in mind yet, but despite the sardonic suggestion of one of my students it will *not* be *Celebration, Son of Secular City*.

UN BEL DI?

MUSIC

The New York City Opera gave two contemporary works their local premieres this spring and, frankly, these were almost enough to make me join that growing throng of critics who think serious (or deficit-financed) music will be saved by the Beatles or Bob Dylan or some other citizen of Pop City. I probably would have been a member of this hopeful throng by now if *lieder* were cherished for its lyrics, alone. Most of these critics seem to be literary folk, understandably intrigued by John Lennon or Bob the poet (not to be confused with Dylan the adenoïdal balladeer, who would serve his madder music with a stronger whine). Surely, under all that hair, these boys have the earmarks of artists.

I quite agree with Richard Poirier who, in *Partisan Review*, envied the Pop audience its sense of fun. The only ones who have any fun with today's serious music are the composers, during composition. It so happens, I find the Beatles endearing—but, aside from "A Day in the Life," not enduring. A serious music of the future, stitched together like some Frankenstein monster from the none too delectable *corpus* of Pop, dismays just as much as those two things I endured at the New York City Opera: Alberto Ginastera's *Bomarzo* (wow! far out! Argentina!) and Douglas Moore's latest entry in The Great American Opera Sweepstakes, *Carry Nation* (a dog). Let me really lay it on you about these, okay? I mean like I can predict the future as well as anyone else, you know, but a critic's territory is the past and—*hélas!*—the present.

Rumors about Ginastera's *Bomarzo* had stirred up the City Opera's subscribers, who are restless enough as it is. Buenos Aires, the composer's hometown, had banned it as pornography! Washington, where it was premiered by City Opera talent, had found it shocking! The libretto did sound promising. It was based on a novel by Manuel Mujica Láinez, who had become so fascinated by the grotesque stone statues in a Renaissance garden near Viterbo, in Italy, and so frustrated when he could learn little about the Duke of Bomarzo, who had commissioned them, that he wrote 600 pages on the assumption that the Duke could only have been an impotent homosexual hunchback poisoned by his nephew. It's a thought. I attended *Bomarzo* in a state of high anticipation, I assure you, but long before Jack Cole's "erotic ballet" had cleared it of that pornography charge, I was regarding things with nothing but clinical interest.

The *Zeitgeist* or something had spooked Ginastera into writing *Bomarzo* in several of today's nastier styles. This should have made it a stylistic horror, but these styles are uniformly horrible, already, so there was a splendidly consistent air of annoyance about the whole evening. We

even got “atonal or serial” melodic lines! (I would go “har har har” but an “atonal or serial” melodic line is no laughing matter.) We were spared any electronic wailing though, occasionally, the 24-voice chorus ululated from the pit in the aleatoric, or “semi-improvised,” manner. I needn’t add that 24 choristers improvising at once bears as much resemblance to music as an IRT rush hour does to choreography. The orchestra, unflaggingly conducted by general director Julius Rudel, worked from a very woolly score to produce equally chaotic results. The tonal fabric was suffocatingly thick with brassy sneers, windy noodling, and stringy tweakings, yet prickly as a hair shirt with bright percussive splinterings, wiry *glissandi*, and humdrumming on the tympani, snares and bongos. I found so little musical logic in most of these chordal assaults that I presumed *Bomarzo* was composed at the sliderule instead of the piano.

Certainly everything *looked* splendid. Striking stage pictures were created by Ming Cho Lee’s settings, Tito Capobianco’s staging, Hans Sondheim’s lighting, and José Varona’s costumes—except for those ghastly oversize diapers on a couple of the unfortunate, purportedly sexy males. A deaf man would have found the City Opera’s production gripping. It supplied the meaning the score lacked as music. Those who were so bowled over by it that they felt Ginastera had truly brought us opera “in our time” should try listening to the CBS recording and see how they like *Bomarzo*, plain. Imagine the Sistine Ceiling done over by some abstract expressionist yet still intended as scenes from The Bible (The Fall of Man would, of course, be a black blot) and you’ll have some idea of the monotonous hubbub Ginastera passed off as opera.

Berg, in *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, showed that great opera needn’t have all its inspiration distilled into melody if the composer has mastered mood, climax and contrast. Ginastera resembles Berg only in a choice of anguished subject matter. How ironic that the seeming arbitrariness of Ginastera’s score should offset his promising idea about making the libretto, from Scene II on, a this-is-your-life-Bomarzo flashback, passing before the Duke’s eyes as he dies of Nephew’s poison. It was a meaninglessly lurid life but not the dull one it became when set to this music, where everything from impotence to orgies became tedium in varying degrees of loudness. How, really, can Ginastera be considered either a musician or a dramatist?

Capobianco’s direction made the cast act well above opera’s point-and-lurch level, though I wish that some apparitions during the Duke’s several hallucinations hadn’t made such conventional entrances and exits. Salvador Novoa acted all too convincingly as the Duke. How everyone sang is anyone’s guess. I liked the eerie way Clara-mae Turner kept intoning “Bomarzo”; most of those other “atonal or serial” melodic lines might just as well have been given to a petulant muezzin periodically seized with d.t.’s. The best of the lot went to a Shepherd Boy.

It wasn’t much—Ginastera’s no Wagner or Paul McCartney—but a remarkably sweet-voiced, surely pitched boy soprano named Robert Harwood sang it beautifully.

Douglas Moore’s *Carry Nation*, which shall henceforth be referred to as “*Carry*” since I could take exactly half of it, was in the traditional vein (all melody and diatonics) yet none the better for it. It’s sure to be cited as proof that traditional composition is “bankrupt,” “in ruins,” etc. The concrete metaphors are supposed to reinforce the spacious abstract concept that one must write only “the music of our time.” Frankly, I don’t want to hear this morning’s headlines set to music. Who wrote music of his time, anyway? The character of the artist determines what’s created—not the calendar. *Carry* is proof that Moore can neither create music in the good old way nor put valuable avant-garde discoveries to recognizably musical use. He cannot write opera, only bad musical comedy with delusions of grandeur.

Carry began with a dismayingly jaunty Prologue (c. 1900) in which our heroine smashed up a saloon with even less fury than Eliza showed telling ’Enry ’Iggins just you wait. Then Scene I (1865) came on, deadly serious, with pious Father Nation shaming the family’s dissolute new boarder into joining them at evening prayer (a quartet, get it?). An atheist, this boarder was—a drinker, too—yet his sardonic prayer (“O, God, if there be a God”) differed little, musically, from the Nations’ firm belief. So it went, from earthbound love duet to toe-tappin’ hoe-down—nowhere. The production was in the City Opera’s seediest burlap & bustle manner, with muzzy projections, rickety props and wooden blocking. It looked as if it had been *found* somewhere.

Maybe I *will* make a prediction: Future musicologists will find nothing called “American opera” up to 1968—only Americans who tried to write opera. Argentine opera will be an equally fallow field. As for the symphonies—No, I’ll just have to wait and hear. HARRIS GREEN

HOMAGE TO WILLIAM TROY



ETC.

William Troy was the great literature teacher of his day. Over the years, whenever his name has come up in conversations, at the Deux Magots in Paris, at a small Riverside Drive dinner party in New York, even between the hushed walls of The New York Society Library, strangers rise with a flash of startled reverence, “Did you know William Troy? Why, I took his course at the New School on the novel. Brilliant, absolutely brilliant.”

All of us who knew, loved and revered William Troy bemoaned the book of essays promised but never finished. Bill was no saint. He drank too much and he

wouldn't finish his book. But now the wonderful has come to pass, *William Troy: Selected Essays* has been published posthumously by the Rutgers University Press (\$9.00), with an introduction by Stanley Edgar Hyman and a moving memoir by Allen Tate. And this spring the essays won the National Book Award.

I approached the "Selected Essays" as I imagine many other former students of Troy will, in fear and trembling. Were his insights as trenchant as we remembered or was it the hero worship of youth that lent them luster? Was it the timbre of his glorious reading voice that wrought such depth to the hours we spent as his students? That Troy used the findings of Freud and Jung, was one of the first to point to the role of ancient myths in modern themes, all of this is known but surely not compelling. That he was an early Joyce scholar, that many of his insights were ahead of his time and stolen whole hog by other critics, is no news. Only the essays would reveal whether Troy is still a seminal critic.

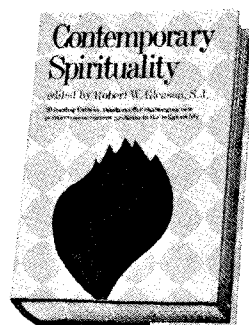
To sound the difference between Troy's critical tone and that of another critic, I picked up a book of selected criticism that is being used in colleges, Malcolm Cowley's *Think Back on Us*. (Cowley wrote reviews for *The New Republic* at approximately the same time Troy was writing movie reviews for *The Nation*.) At random I chose a piece toward the back of the book, "Virginia Woolf, England Under Glass," only to find that the core

of the essay came from an observation of Troy's: "This method, as I think William Troy was the first to point out, is that of lyric poetry rather than fiction." So much for coincidence. Cowley's pieces are easy topical reviews. William Troy's essays are inquiries in depth. The following is Cowley's opening paragraph on F. Scott Fitzgerald: "*Tender Is the Night* is a good novel that puzzles you and ends by making you a little angry because it isn't a great novel also. It doesn't give the feeling of being complete in itself." And here is Troy's opening on the same author: "Although it is one of the most obvious statements that can be made of any novelist, it has never exactly been pointed out about Scott Fitzgerald that what he is principally concerned with in all his novels and tales is character. 'She was a fine girl—one of the best,' remarks the hero of one of the stories in *Taps at Reveille* of the wife who has abandoned him to follow her own career. 'She had character.' All the important personages in the book have character, or are trying to have character, or have irretrievably lost their character."

Troy was far from optimistic about the fate of the western world, as the following from an article on Henry James attests: "At a moment when loss of continuity is our gravest threat, when personality is everywhere at a discount, when all consequent values dissolve in the general terror . . ." and from "Notes on *Finnegan's Wake*," "The progression would seem to be from boisterous heroic action through feudal romance to the combination of abstract and psychotic preoccupation with sex of the modern civilized period." Still, he never gave up the interpretive quest of following the artist in his wrestle with reality to wrest a meaning from chaos.

The real difference between Troy's criticism and that of other contemporary critics lies in the depths of his soundings. In the essay "Time and Space Conception in Modern Literature," he explains that he takes the metaphysical approach to literary criticism, which he describes as incorporating other fields just as the work of art does. Troy's tools are the findings of anthropologists, economists, historians, psychologists, physicists, textual literary critics and the common sense discoveries of everyman. The resulting criticism is infused with percipient ironies and delightful images. Two passages that I particularly treasure both come from "Thoughts on Tragedy," in which Troy warns that "there is increasing historical evidence that if our culture does not soon return to some apprehension of the nature and meaning of the tragic view of experience there will not be anyone left with even enough perception to mourn its demise." My two passages follow: "The difficulty rather is for contemporary man to stop talking long enough to hear what it is precisely that he is saying. It is the very great difficulty of occupying the stage and witnessing the spectacle at one and the same time." And: "In such a situation, we might think that nothing short of an authentically supernatural view itself would be reliable, unless we recognize that tragedy, in its fully de-

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veloped form, provides us with a means of vision for the correction of individual astigmatism by humility."

In each of Troy's essays his first concern is the reality of the literary work under consideration; concurrently he is aware of the nature of the time and place in which the author lived and the author's own deep concerns—this constitutes a second reality; finally, there hovers the awareness of a third dimension, the moment and state of society in which William Troy existed as he wrote each particular piece. The interaction of this three-fold honesty raises Troy's essays beyond most critical writing of the last decade and posthumously rings a clear prophetic note. Take, for example, the following from one of two essays on Lawrence: "For Grace was invented by the theologians because it was necessary to establish some bridge between the human and the divine by which man could receive some assistance in controlling the forces of his nature; but in Lawrence sex is indistinguishable from these forces themselves. To attempt to improve human relationships through sex is therefore like attempting to improve nature by lifting it on its own bootstraps. It is an attempt for which Lawrence could have found a discouraging precedent in a much earlier representation of the tortured Anglo-Saxon Protestant mind, who sought 'the perfection of nature' only to end his days with a Yahoo babble in his brain. Swift belied human nature by projecting it too purely on its Houynnhm side, Lawrence by giving too much scope to its Yahoo side; but both pictures equalize the common injustice to reality."

It is refreshing, too, to rediscover in these essays Troy's concern for the dilemmas of the "moral imagination," to consider the role of the artist as hero, to reconsider, with Troy and Mann, "that art supplies us with 'a pattern of the human.' " and to remember that in the moral imagination, "the potential is realized with a purity and vividness with which it can never unfortunately be realized in actuality; it is romantic to think that it might be . . ."

Finally, these essays awaken the reader to a new awareness of the mystery and adventure in being human; they turn the reader back to the literary works of modern masters and past masters with new excitement and understanding, for the reader's guide has lost none of his passionate seriousness; his voice is still a glorious *basso profundo* and his talk brilliant. Indeed, William Troy makes living sense.

JOAN SIMON

AN APPEAL: Norman Thomas writes on behalf of a leadership training program for Negroes which has 50 of its trainees elected to public office and 32 serving as teachers or social workers with college degrees—a program which "is now doing one of the most important and most useful jobs ever undertaken by any branch of the civil rights movement." Readers should send contributions—which are tax deductible—to Scholarship, Education and Defense Fund for Racial Equality, 150 Nassau Street, New York, N.Y. 10038.

NIGHTMARES AND DAYMARES

THE SCREEN

It is interesting that those two bad boys of cinema, the superb film makers Bergman and Bunuel, should turn up with new pictures here at the same time; but it is less surprising that both masters of the obscure should be treating similar subject matter: the thin line between reality and dreams, and between sanity and madness. Both directors, whose techniques are quite different, have handled this theme well before, but this time both are more personally indulgent than ever before. And both seem to be so anxious to prove that we really are such stuff as dreams are made on that the directors, themselves, make the line between dreams and reality so thin audiences cannot tell which scenes are real and which are fantasy. At times one even wonders if Bunuel and Bergman are putting us on.

"All my pictures are dreams," Ingmar Bergman said in a recent and excellent TV interview; and he added that when the audience's dreams meet his dreams, that is real communication. I'm afraid Mr. Bergman and I do not communicate in his new "Hour of the Wolf." The loss is no doubt mine. The film has many excellent things in it, as it follows the story of an artist and his wife on a lonely

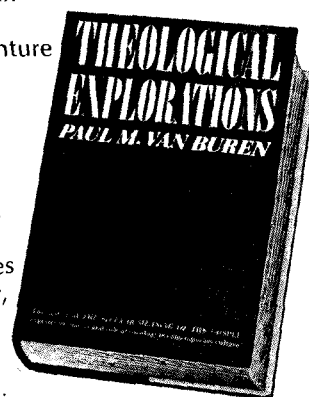
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10 May 1968: 239

island; and Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann are first-rate in this shadowy place that is real enough. But are the other inhabitants of the island real or are they figments of the artist's wavering mind? The picture starts with the wife sitting at a table out-of-doors and talking into the camera and to us and to Bergman, who wrote the screenplay, so everything we get in the film is second-hand or third-hand as interpreted by her version of Max's increasing madness and by his diary (which is that of a madman) and by filmmaker Bergman, himself—who would of course have his own ideas on what is going on here. And what is going on is wild, as Max describes the people who live in the castle on the island and his ex-mistress (Ingrid Thulin) and his encounter with a little boy whom he murders. But these people are also described by Liv—and actually by Bergman when actors portray them in all their decadence in the castle and other parts of the island.

Perhaps it is wrong for me to want things more cut-and-dried than Bergman makes them. During the course of that interesting TV interview, Bergman said that the conception of a picture should pass into the viewer without going through his mind. And perhaps this surrealistic method is exactly what the director wanted in "Hour of the Wolf" as we accompany the artist and his wife to an insane dinner party at the castle or later follow the then-madder artist in a nightmare journey in the castle during which one elderly woman not only removes her hat but also her face and then drops her eyeballs into wine glasses; and then still later he fondles the nude dead body of his mistress who comes to life and laughs and laughs at the macabre joke. In a way, "Hour of the Wolf" is a continuation of "Persona," in which one woman took on the personality of another. In "Wolf," the wife wonders if she too isn't taking on the husband's demons. Don't people who live together for a long time (in this case seven years) begin to resemble each other? In spite of its ambiguities, "Hour of the Wolf" is fascinating. Even though Bergman's dreams and mine don't coincide, I found his nightmares much more exciting and interesting than mine.

"Belle de Jour" is probably the classiest movie Luis Bunuel has ever made. It has an outstanding French cast, some luscious color photography, and costumes for Catherine Deneuve (designed by Yves Saint Laurent) that will make women's mouths water. The screenplay, as written by Bunuel and Jean-Claude Carrière from the novel by Joseph Kessel, won't—or at least shouldn't. It tells the story of a wife (made doubly beautiful by Catherine Deneuve and those costumes) who, finding her sex life with her husband leaves much to be desired, works in the daytime at a house of prostitution. The husband (Jean Sorel) is a likable young doctor but rather on the square side. Whether the wife dreams the scenes at the house (run by Genevieve Page) or whether they are real or her suppressed desires, Mr. Bunuel never bothers to make clear. Or whether some of them and their tragic aftermath

are in the husband's mind is not entirely clear either.

Interestingly enough, the scenes at the whore house, though shocking, are not really pornographic; and even more surprising many of the effects throughout "Belle de Jour" are rather humorous—as if Bunuel really were making a joke and expects us to accept it as such. If the film is meant to be serious, then it needs more clarity as to intention and solution. As a joke, it is off-color, in spite of its gorgeous photography. PHILIP T. HARTUNG



THOMAS JOHN CARLISLE

NIGHT WATCHMAN

His prowling is authentic and his stealth
is deputized and authorized and meets
the need of all who sleep within this box.
He leaves his name at checkpoint intervals
to prove that he has touched at every post
and rested half his eyes on every shadow
though in obscurest corners his light fails.
Raccoons observe him just as much at home
in darkness as themselves and beg such food
as he can rustle unashamedly.
They are not troubled by Diogenes.
I too look on him as some sort of friend
whose rounds surround me with a route of safety
but his boots waken me short of the climax
of my best dreams or in a troubled segment
of the night which he believes belongs to him.
Hearing his step echo in retrospect
I lie and try to sentinel myself
but cannot find an honest man in me.

LORA DUNETZ

IF HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS

Will it matter after the smoky ages,
Will it matter at all
That the words were beautiful
Or how they appeared on the pages,
Or that they were written? If no reader remain
Will it have mattered
That your singing was heard
In a world grown dear in vain?
Where does it say that a song is for ever? or
That the world shall last?
If heaven and earth shall pass
Shall your word, then, endure?

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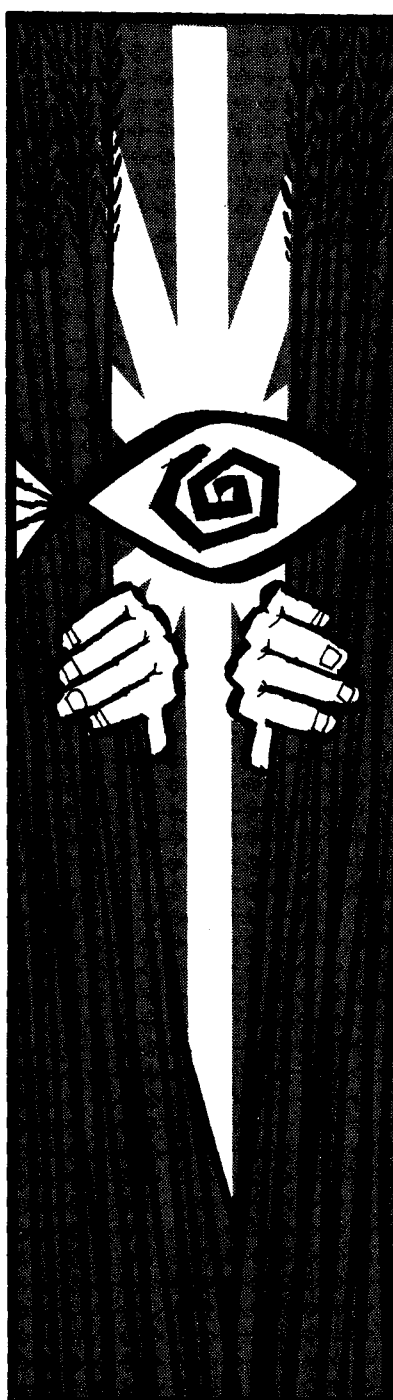
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WILLIAM JAMES SMITH

Three good novels in a more or less random clutch of three from the current crop suggest either that standards are improving or that I am in an unusually long run of good humor. But I suspect that these three novels are all

pretty good in their modest ways, though none is earth-shaking or even terribly "serious." They belong, in fact, to what seems to me a new breed of serio-comic novel. It's not Black Humor, something much less acerbic, and it would be most unfair to call them Gray Humor—Cool Humor, perhaps, if that epithet is not already outdated. They deal light-heartedly with what are often the real tragedies of life and they never find a joke entirely inappropriate. But in Cool Humor the joke never becomes an obsession and the Cool Humorist is capable of a welcome change of mood now and then even if it veers toward the sentimental. And the authors of these three novels at least are able to use the language with occasional glitterings of wit and elegance.

James Leigh's *Downstairs at Ramsey's* is set in Fabulous California where it is not inconceivable that two thirtyish divorced gents should become the legal guardians of a teenage Lolita with feverish designs in her pretty little head. The story is told by Victor Ramsey, a retired British motion picture butler and landlord—upstairs—of Delilah, the teenage monster, and her distracted guardians. Like the original Lolita, Delilah turns out to be much more seducer than seduced. She is set, however, not merely on seduction, but on marriage, and when she is thwarted she takes her revenge. The *ménage* upon which Mr. Ramsey has been eavesdropping through the radiator vents, is busted up to a fare-thee-well and the sexual romp turns into something like tragedy. It seems to me a commentary on the skill of the Cool Humorists that they are able to work a switch of this sort without straining credulity and without essentially souring the humor.

The method—or gimmick—Mr. Leigh has used in constructing his novel is an odd and awkward one. The narrator, Mr. Ramsey, plays little or no part in the action of the story and the circum-

stances are built up from overheard conversations and sound effects, with only an occasional direct encounter with the principals. It says something for the author's talents that it all comes off as well as it does. And Mr. Ramsey, as an observer apart but sympathetically interested, could very well serve as the model himself for the Cool Humorist. He cares what happens to the participants in his little drama but he does not try to manipulate things or people; he comments by indirection, coming out of his retirement to return to yet another series of English butlers; and while he can see the humor of a pratfall at a dramatically crucial moment, he can also see the pathos of a hard-bitten joke.

Leslie Thomas' *Orange Wednesday* is a British entry. It is a fey take-off of the international intrigue novel. The Great Powers are assembling in a small town in Germany to sign a pact reunifying East and West Germany. Stumbling into the preparations comes Brunel Hopkins, a young British officer who has been napping away the years in Schoene Fulsbad as custodian of the Moribund Documents Section of the Army of Occupation. He is soon haplessly involved with beautiful nymphomaniacs and murderous security men, and the whole thing is much funnier and not so relentlessly broad as the many other efforts of the kind.

Of course, the British have been doing this sort of thing for centuries—they may very well have been the original Cool Humorists. (Surely *Beowulf* was written tongue in cheek.) Other nationalities trying the same game have always ended up smeary and ham-handed. There is a standard British patter, born in every British child, which the non-British find irresistibly funny. It is often as much a matter of delivery as of content—a sort of dry off-handedness which Mr. Thomas has down to a nicety. It is often, too, a simple matter

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of vocabulary. The British are willing to use an unusual or unexpected word for its intrinsic effect, while we here in the Land of Hemingway are inclined to regard a vocabulary as a mark of degeneracy. *Orange Wednesday* will not make literary history, nor is it likely to become anyone's favorite off-beat novel. But it is good. And something more than amusing.

Best of the lot, perhaps, is another American entry, first-novelist L. J. Davis' *Whence All But He Had Fled*. This despite the fact that his subject matter—artists in the East Village—has two strikes against it from the start, and Mr. Davis' narrative impetus tends to run down and need recentering every now and again. Hero Robert Probish has fled the wilds of Queens County for Tompkins Square and the Artist's Life. Here he manages to fall prey to all the vicissitudes the comic hero is born for—notably the ministrations of well-meaning friends. His landlords either sue him or adopt him, his old buddies slip him bad acid and steal his girl friends, his mentor involves him with the weirdest of all possible patrons, and his hangers-on literally drive him through the roof in a final desperately light-hearted attempt at an escape. Probish brings off the unique accomplishment of uniting all his neighbors, Puerto Rican and Ukranian, Jewish and WASP, in a united front to get poor Probish.

Poor Probish comes through it all, hardly victorious but at any rate still resilient. Probish indeed manages to be one of those comic heroes who takes his own predicament seriously, steadfastly refusing to go along with the gag. He fights a gallant, if retreating, battle for some kind of order and meaning in his life. When he is outrageous he is repentant, and though from time to time he folds up in despair he regularly pulls himself together for another try. He even manages to suggest that he is a good artist and that he will be a better one.

L. J. Davis does something of the same thing. Mr. Davis comes from the wilds of Idaho by way of California and Columbia University and I expect, hopefully, that Avenue B will be just

another exploratory stopover. Like Mr. Thomas and Mr. Leigh, Mr. Davis succeeds in being Cool without slipping over into the brutality of Black Humor. Mr. Davis' humor is not the machine-polished British variety, it is deliberately unsophisticated. (Thomas Berger is another splendid American practitioner of the style.) It is, in fact, distinctively in our own American humorous tradition of slapstick and the lovable hayseed, for all that Mr. Davis' novel is set in Flower People Land. The

typical American comic hero, such as Probish, continues to have a strangely pioneering and evangelical cast to his thinking here in the middle—nay, the end!—of the twentieth century. Probish is still the big friendly American of the western ranges even when he is plodding through a snowstorm over the tenement roofs of the Lower East Side, clutching his knapsack and his drawings.

The comic hero is properly invincible. Charlie Chaplin doesn't go shuf-

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fling off down the road in defeat. He leaves in the triumph of his own finer feelings—and no sooner is he out of sight than a new adventure begins for him, with a new and even more wistful heroine. Heroines aren't faring too well these days. The only one who could qualify as heroine in these three novels is downright malevolent. But all their heroes triumph even in the teeth of defeat. Mr. Leigh's trudges off to jail, Mr. Thomas' is drummed out of the quiet bliss of the army, and Mr. Davis' flees the undeserved vengeance of the popu-

lace. But they all win in their ways—and if that were all that distinguished Cool Humor from Black Humor it would be well worth it. Advice to Black Humorists: Cool it! It's all right to pulverize your hero as long as he doesn't give up. A pratfall can be funnier than a crutch.

After the Assassination

JOHN SPARROW

Chilmark Press, \$3.95

JOSIAH THOMPSON

Warden Sparrow's effort is not really a book. It is a 10,000 word review-article published originally by the *Times Literary Supplement* and now rushed into print as a 77-page mini-book, at a full book price.

Like other works before it, it seeks to defend the Warren Report by attacking the Report's critics. A characteristically British set of epithets are attached to those who have questioned the Commission's findings. Except for the "professors" whom the Warden of All Souls College, Oxford, treats with the deference due fellow union members, the critics turn out to be "demonologists" (pp. 5, 6, 15, 38, 64, 71), "a host of crack-pots and rabble-rousing publicists, of 'patriots' with a self-appointed mission and Baconians with an *idée fixe*" (p. 7), who are writing out of greed for fame or profit (pp. 4, 18), or political bias (pp. 13, 68-70, 72), or from a "passion [which] is apt to induce an intellectual myopia" (p. 13). This sort of argument by insult is a familiar part of the post-assassination scene. What distinguishes Sparrow's invective is that it combines the pomposity of an Oxbridge manner with an extraordinary fatuity. Two examples:

In a passage later highlighted with approval by *Time* magazine, Sparrow charges the critics with an "inability to form a picture of how things happen in real life" and proceeds to argue his point by offering the following instance: "If it is hard to believe that Oswald hit his target in two out of three quick shots, it is harder still to suppose that two men, more than 100 yards apart

and unable to see or communicate with each other . . . could have synchronized their fire so perfectly; and it is hardest of all to imagine that conspirators would have allowed the success of their plan to depend on such a feat of synchronization." Perhaps in the "real life" of the Coldstream Guards, where Sparrow served in World War II, an ambush was unknown. But in other armies ambushes are brought off with considerable regularity and no great difficulty: the various gunmen simply open fire when the target reaches an agreed-upon spot.

Earlier, Sparrow charges Mark Lane with "recklessness" or "negligence" for failing to mention certain FBI reports involving a witness, Julia Ann Mercer. But, as Lane has pointed out in reply, since the documents were not declassified until after the publication of *Rush to Judgment* it is difficult to know what Sparrow thinks he should have done: perhaps lead a charge on the National Archives? What is most revealing about Sparrow's discussion of this incident is that he is so unfamiliar with the geography of the assassination site as to mistakenly place the incident in Dealey Plaza when in reality it occurred some two blocks distant!

The list of fatuities could be extended at will. No critic ever claimed that an early November military rehearsal of a Presidential funeral had sinister significance. Nor did any critic, to my knowledge, ever misjudge the time needed to fire three shots from Oswald's rifle. These are straw horses which Sparrow sets up only to knock down.

The real interest of this slender volume lies in its failure to deliver what its subtitle promises: "A Positive Appraisal of the Warren Report." *After the Assassination* never really addresses the Warren Report while offering a negative yet superficial appraisal of the Report's critics. In its refusal to confront the central difficulties of the Report, difficulties which have been raised over the last four years by a host of critics, is to be found its significance. Why was the President smashed backward and to the left under the impact of the fatal bullet while, according to

REVIEWERS

WILLIAM JAMES SMITH is a free-lance writer.

JOSIAH THOMPSON is himself the author of a much-discussed book dealing with the Kennedy assassination, *Six Seconds in Dallas* (Bernard Geis Associates).

WILLIAM KUHN, a graduate student at the University of Chicago Divinity School, is the author of *In Pursuit of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Pflaum Press).



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the Commission, this bullet was fired directly from the rear? And why did impact debris from this shot fly to the *left rear* while, again according to the Commission, this shot blew out the *right* side of the President's head? Why does the Zapruder film validate unambiguously Governor Connally's claim that he was hit by a later shot than the one which struck the President, while the Commission's "single bullet" theory holds that they were hit simultaneously by the same shot? How did this "single bullet" manage to pierce two people, shattering two bones and causing seven

separate wounds, all the while keeping its nose in perfect shape and losing only an infinitesimal part of its substance? Finally, how did this same "single bullet," which purportedly wounded Governor Connally after striking the President, find its way onto a stretcher completely unconnected with the care of either man?

These are some of the difficulties which anyone seeking to offer a "positive appraisal of the Warren Report" must inevitably face. The failure of Warden Sparrow to face them points up an all important fact. It is now nearly three years since the principal difficulties with the *Report* first became known. They have not been surmounted. Both historian Jacob Cohen and Assistant Counsel Wesley Liebler of the Warren Commission were rumored to be under contract for books which would defend the *Report*. It is revealing that neither of these books has been produced. What has been produced are shoddy works (like Sparrow's) which attempt to parade invective and insult for scholarship and argument. In that single fact is to be found the true significance of *After the Assassination*.

Two Studies in the Theology of Bonhoeffer

JURGEN MOLTMANN
JURGEN WEISSBACH

Scribner's, \$3.95

WILLIAM KUHN

A curiosity of recent Protestant theology is that Dietrich Bonhoeffer, so popular and influential in England and America, has been comparatively ignored in his native Germany. Yet up until perhaps two years ago, this has been the case; Bultmann was far more influential, and generally accorded greater stature than Bonhoeffer.

The twin studies in this book were written in 1959 (Moltmann's) and 1956 (Weissbach's). Inadvertently they explain, perhaps better than any other source, the reluctance of Germans to get enthusiastic about Bonhoeffer. The essays both set out to examine major

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structures of thought in Bonhoeffer's works, beginning with the student thesis, *The Communion of Saints*, and leading to the *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Moltmann, known generally for *The Theology of Hope*, concentrates on the sociological concern that penetrates all of Bonhoeffer's thought. Weissbach's essay attempts to show how Bonhoeffer's christology (the revealed, concrete God) provides a fresh understanding of ethics.

In "The Lordship of Christ and Human Society" Moltmann focuses on Bonhoeffer's early works, especially *The Communion of Saints*. Bonhoeffer inherited from Ernst Troeltsch a deep concern with the sociological nature of the church. But as Moltmann notes, Bonhoeffer came to the problem with a resource that Troeltsch lacked: the Reformation sense of Revelation, which Karl Barth had just recently resuscitated. As such, the problem took on new proportions for Bonhoeffer: how to understand a revealed church as a human, interacting community, never

losing sight of its revelational basis. The problem, implicit in all of Bonhoeffer's works, was developed most solidly in *The Communion of Saints*, and got some airing in the Ethics and his prison letters.

Moltmann performs a valuable service not only by showing how this theme continues throughout Bonhoeffer's writings, but likewise by suggesting how the concept of the Lordship of Christ in the Ethics answers the problem. For in the Lordship of Christ Bonhoeffer found a point of integration between Christ and the church as a sociological phenomenon—notably the Mandates. As far as I know, the question has never been treated with such thoroughness in the Bonhoeffer literature.

Weissbach's essay, "Christology and Ethics," attacks a similar problem in a similar way. Again emphasizing Bonhoeffer's primary revelational starting point, Weissbach searches out the specific nature of Christian ethics—actually, of mature human life—as Bonhoeffer saw it. He reaches a conclusion similar

to Moltmann's: that an integrated understanding of Christ and the world, through his Lordship, reveals how profoundly central Christ is for the secular world as secular world, and how any human ethics must emerge from Christ.

Both men treat their subject with competent scholarship and a thorough knowledge of the structures in Bonhoeffer's theology. But the failure of both essays to prove interesting to an American fascinated by Bonhoeffer can be found right here—as can a strong suggestion as to why Bonhoeffer has never kindled the enthusiasm in Germany that he has in America.

Moltmann and Weissbach go after structures, attempting to treat Bonhoeffer's work as if it were, together, some kind of ranging systematics. The fragmentation of almost all Bonhoeffer's writing is seen by them as an obstacle, not the key to Bonhoeffer's thought. Consequently, as far as they can go with Bonhoeffer on structural, systematic works (who really reads *The Communion of Saints*?), his ability to take theology beyond the self-contained dissertation and into the interplay between writer and reader. Moltmann and Weissbach and, I suspect, most of the older Germans, have not recognized this about Bonhoeffer, and in performing marvelous anatomical studies of the body, have forgotten that the man still lives.

CORRESPONDENCE

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

(Continued from page 221)

Sheriff Wes Pomeroy. Undersheriff Pomeroy, at the time of the conferences at Airlie House, was serving as an employee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and was not involved as a participant but rather as a faculty resource person.

Mr. Garvey reports that the request to restructure the conference before beginning the field seminar was "rejected out of hand." The restructuring of the conference has been a continual process since the first program which began on January 15. Perhaps most importantly

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from Mr. Garvey's point of view has been the addition to each of the field conferences of a ghetto representative for one of the evening presentations.

When you address yourself to a topic as explosive as the subject of this article, I would think that you would take the slight effort required to verify what appear to be insignificant facts but which in an inaccurate compilation present a slant to the article that is a disservice to yourself and to your readers.

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Reply

My understanding was that there were four seminars, with about 25 police officials in each. If the total was 130 rather than 100, I regret the inaccuracy.

For the record, Community Relations staff were appalled at the absence of black community representation generally, and at the handling of the confrontation with Mrs. Hardy.

I do not doubt that the seminars are continually being restructured by their sponsors. This is a far cry from the direct participation of black people in their design though I am certainly pleased to be advised that an evening presentation by "a ghetto representative" has been added.

On the matter of Negro consultants, Mrs. Hardy's group contacted the Howard professor whom LRI claimed as its sole Negro associate, and were informed that he had severed his affiliation with LRI some months earlier.

The point is not whether there were 13 field seminars or ten, or whether Mr. Pomeroy was a participant or staff member. The Riot Commission has placed strong blame on police abuse and heavy-handedness toward Negroes; yet a Justice Department-sponsored seminar on riots for police officials was designed devoid of participation by the community most directly involved, and—not surprisingly—badly botched a symbolic confrontation with the ghetto. If there is now some minimal black representation in the seminars, then perhaps the incident was not without value.

ERNEST GARVEY

"Law and Order"

Baton Rouge, La.

To the Editors: Your Martin Luther King editorial (April 19) refers to "law and order" as "the classic device for keeping minorities in their place in a democracy." Isn't it really something more than that? I had always believed that "law and order" was the foundation of our government as one of "laws not men."

What alternative do you propose? Anarchy?

JAMES H. HYNES



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